

**WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) submitted into the Congressional Record the following statement:**

“Mr. Speaker, on Veterans Day, I had the privilege of attending the annual parade honoring our veterans in Leonardtown and remembering the fallen service members from St. Mary’s County, Maryland. It was a moving and meaningful ceremony, with many who have served our nation in uniform and their families attending. The parade in Leonardtown is the largest in the state, with a long tradition of honoring the service of Maryland veterans.

“The program included four students from Leonardtown Elementary School, each of whom read a brief statement written to answer the question ‘What does Veterans Day mean to me?’ Their words were a powerful affirmation that the ideals our service members have fought to protect continue to be passed on to the next generation, and that with those ideals we teach a love of country and respect for service. I would like to share their statements with my colleagues.

“Katy Kindley wrote:

Veterans Day means to honor and love the ones who fought in all wars or to honor someone who didn’t fight but served to help those in damaged places. Where do they go when they leave? What places will they visit? Will they ever come back? All armed forces that serve our country take only with them – hope. The hope that they won’t let those in need be [needy], the hope to succeed in their job, or the hope to just come home to their families. Navy, Army, Air Force, U.S. Marines, or any other force that serves our country take hope and the will to serve with them.

If you are the child of a veteran, hold your hand up. How do you feel when your mom or dad leave to go on travel? Do you feel scared they will never come back? Do you wonder if they will bring something back? All of your questions remain with you. I’m glad to say that I too have a brilliant and most valiant veteran to look up to – my dad. My dad does his best to serve in the Navy. A lot of times he leaves for a very long trip. One time, he left for seven months! I was

very sad. But I was overjoyed to see him come home. Let's take a day to honor, love, and cherish the ones who served in our country. To all those veterans out there, I say: you rock!

"Liam Byers read his statement:

Can you imagine what life would be like without our brave veterans? We probably would live in a country where we were not free at all. We couldn't go to school and get a good education for our futures. We couldn't go to the church we wanted or go to church at all. We probably couldn't choose our jobs or even our marriages!

The brave veterans who risked their lives and health to fight to keep us free are perhaps some of the bravest people in our proud American history. They keep us and our rights safe and free from oppression, such as communism and tyranny.

We have Veterans Day to honor the brave men and women who fought to keep us and our country free. We have two minutes of silence on Veterans Day called the 'Great Silence,' where we remember everybody who fought (and died) for our freedom. My Boy Scout troop marches in a parade for Veterans Day and throws candy to the parade watchers (and sometime we pick up candy on the road for ourselves!).

On Veterans Day I feel proud to be living in America, where our noble veterans serve in the Armed forces to keep our country free. How do you feel on Veterans Day?

"Lauren Menges shared these thoughts:

Veterans Day is a day set aside to honor America's servicemen and women for their patriotism, love of their country, and willingness to sacrifice for our freedom. A veteran is anyone who has served in the armed forces, such as: Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, or Air Force.

Veterans Day used to be called Armistice Day. It honored the signing of the Armistice that

ended World War I on November 11, 1918. The end of the war took place on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 with the German signing of the Armistice. It was declared a legal holiday on May 13, 1938, and was officially declared Veterans Day on November 11. Some people celebrate with a parade. Most schools have the day off. And other countries celebrate by observing two minutes of silence at 11:00.

I have several family members who served in the military. My great uncle, Gordon Moniz, served in the Korean War, and my uncle, Bryan Menges, served during Operation Desert Storm. My first cousin, Joshua Menges, graduated last year from West Point and is now actively serving his country. I love that my family members served in the military. I am grateful for all the veterans and for their bravery.

I would like to quote from a poem by Linda Ellis called 'Mommy, What is a Veteran?' 'How do you describe a veteran and the sacrifices they made so that you and your children's children could live free ...and unafraid? How do you describe a veteran for a child's sake? You say: A veteran is a person to whom we owe every breath we take.'

"Also, we heard a statement from Maddie McCauley:

To many people, Veterans Day is special. Veterans Day all started on November 11, 1919 as Armistice Day. Armistice Day was to celebrate the first anniversary of World War I. Armistice Day was to honor all the brave soldiers who fought in World War I, keeping the United States safe. Now, Veterans Day is to honor all the brave souls who fought in all wars, who gave us our freedom, which many people elsewhere do not have.

Veterans Day is celebrated with speeches, parades, special church services or ceremonies, visiting graves, and having the Great Silence. Many people visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This tomb holds the body of a U.S. soldier who was killed in battle. Nobody knew who this fearless man was.

Veterans Day to me is an important holiday. I do have a few veterans in my family. My Great-Grandpa Hal was a fighting ace in the Air Force for many years. My family and I hang our American flag from our house. We also wear red, white, and blue to honor America. I think of many soldiers who endured many tough days away from their family fighting. I think, 'Thank

you for all you have suffered just to keep us free and safe.'

"Katy, Liam, Lauren, Maddie, and their classmates, even at their young age, understand the sacrifices made by our veterans. I was glad they were able to participate in the ceremony alongside other public officials, and the many veterans who were on hand.

"Together, we all thanked the families of three St. Mary's County fallen heroes for their sons' service and sacrifice. SPC Raymond J. Faulstich Jr. and CPL Matthew Wallace gave their lives serving in Iraq, and SGT Ryan Patrick Baumann fell in combat in Afghanistan. We also applauded a recently-returned wounded warrior, Thomas Caleb Getscher, who lost both legs and part of an arm in Afghanistan. Patuxent Habitat for Humanity will soon be helping to renovate his home to make it more accessible.

"In their memory, and in honor of the veterans who returned home, we continue to recommit ourselves every Veterans Day to meeting our obligations to those who served our nation and put their lives on the line for the freedoms we hold dear."

###